

An

Inaugural Dissertation

On

Scrophula,

Submitted to the examination of the
Trustees & Medical Professors

of the
University of Pennsylvania

For

The Degree

of

Doctor of Medicine

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of
Warrenton, North Carolina

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University of London

Medical School

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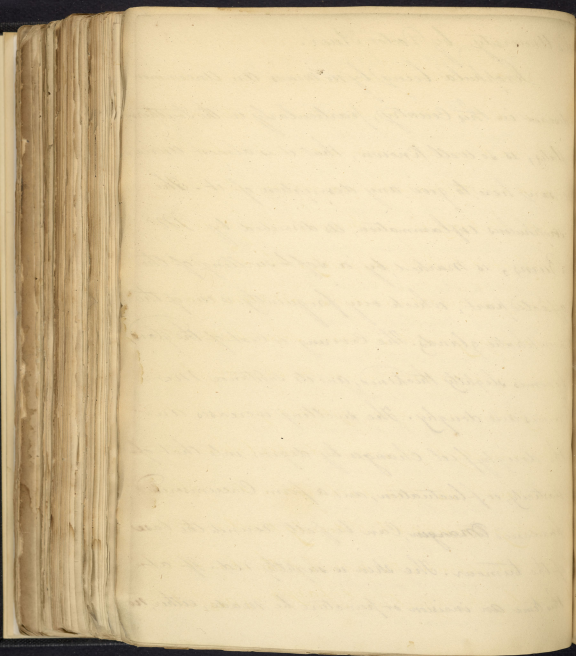
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Scrophula, or Kingevil. —

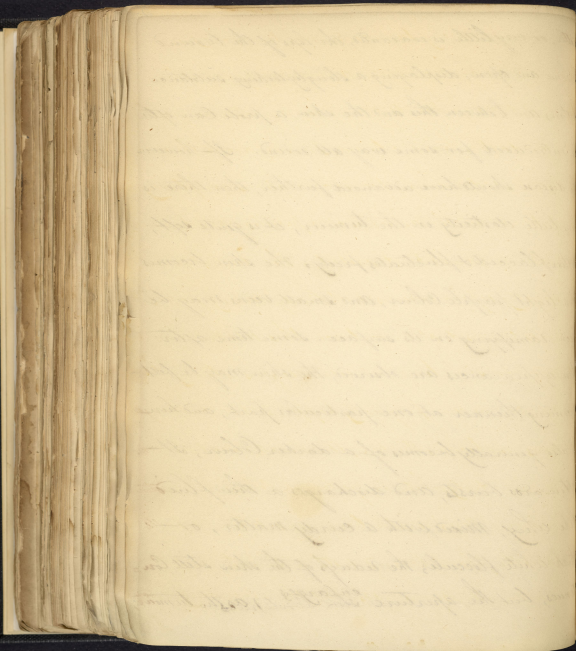
The subject which, I have chosen for this essay, although, much canvassed by almost every writer on Medicine & Surgery, has not (in my opinion) been explained on such principles, as will lead to correct or successful practice; And as the Cure of disease has always been justly Considered as the ultimate object of Physic, I shall attempt such a view of the subject, as will tend to more uniform success in the treatment of this distressing Complaint. I shall, in the first place, briefly notice the theories of some of the most modern Writers on this disease, & secondly, attempt to explain its phenomena, on the principles, taught, in

this University, by Doctor Rush.

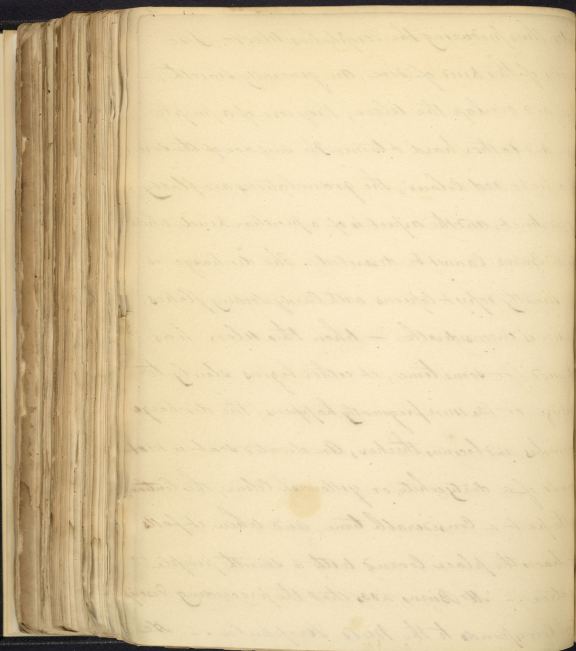
Scrophula being by no means, an Uncommon disease in this Country, particularly in the Southern States, is so well known, that it is almost unnecessary here, to give any description of it. The scrophulous inflammation, as described by Mr. Burns, is marked, by a soft swelling of the affected part, which very frequently, is one of the Lymphatic glands. The covering, or Coat of the gland, becomes slightly thickened, and its substance more porous and doughy. The swelling increases, and the doughy feel changes by degrees, into that of elasticity, or fluctuation, and a firm Circumscribed, hardened Margin, can be felt round the base of the tumour. The skin is slightly red. If at this time an incision or puncture be made, either, no



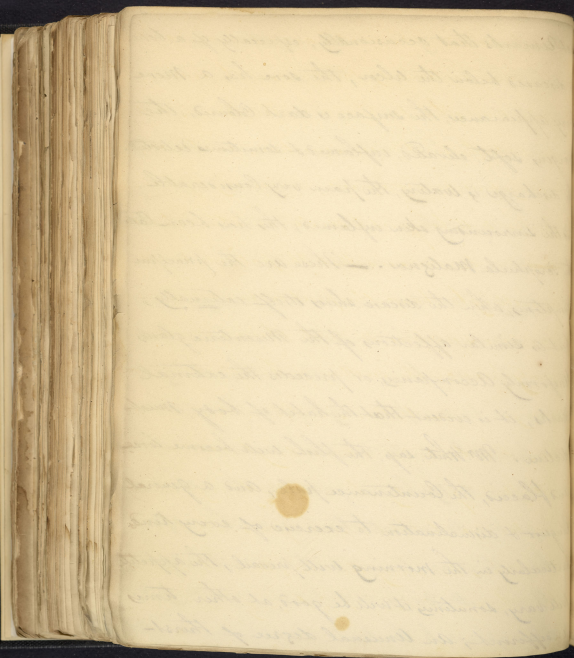
matter, or very little, is evacuated, the lips of the wound
 inflame and open, displaying a sloughy-looking substance
 within, and between this and the skin, a probe can often
 be introduced for some way all round. - If however
 the disease should have advanced further, then there is
 very little elasticity in the tumour, it is quite soft,
 rather flaccid & fluctuates freely; the skin becomes
 of a light purple colour, and small veins may be
 seen ramifying on its surface. Some time after
 these appearances are observed, the skin may be felt
 becoming thinner at one particular part, and here
 it also generally becomes of a darker colour; It
 afterwards bursts, and discharges a thin fluid
 like whey, mixed with a curdy matter, or
 thick white flocculi; the redness of the skin still con-
 tinues, but the aperture ^{enlarges} ~~and continues~~ as the tumour,



subside, thus producing the Serpulous ulcer. The
Margins of this kind of sore, are generally smooth,
thuse, and overlap the ulcer, they are of a purple
colour, and rather hard & tumid. The surface of the sore
is of a light red colour, the granulations are flabby
and indistinct, and the aspect is of a peculiar kind, which,
says Mr. Burns, cannot be described. The discharge is
then, slightlyropy & copious, with Curdy-looking flakes.
The pain is inconsiderable. — When this ulcer has
continued for some time, it either begins, slowly to
Cicatrise, or (as more frequently happens), the discharge
diminishes, and becomes thicker, An elevated seat is next
formed, of a dirty white, or yellowish colour, this continues
on the part a Considerable time, and when it falls
off, leaves the place covered with a smooth, purple
Cicatrix. — Mr Burns ass, that the preceding Descrip-
tion, corresponds to the Mild Serpula. — He



next Remarks that occasionally, especially, if a bone
 be diseased below the ulcer, the sore has a more
 fiery appearance, the surface is dark coloured, the
 margins soft, elevated, inflamed & sometimes deformed.
 The discharge is watery, the pain very considerable,
 and the surrounding skin inflamed; this has been called
 the Scrophula Maligna. — These are the principal
 symptoms, when the disease shews itself externally;
 but as similar affections of the Mesenteric glands
 uniformly accompany, or precedes the external
 Marks, it is evident that the habit of body must
 decline. Mr. White, says, the flesh will become loose
 and flaccid, the Countenance pale, and a general
 languor & disinclination to exercise of every kind,
 particularly in the morning will prevail, the appetite
 will vary, sometimes it will be good, at other times
 indifferent; an unusual degree of thirst—



Will be experienced, Considerable heat will be excited upon the skin, particularly the palms of the hands; the breath will often be offensive; the Bowels will be affected with an Uneasy sensation; and the size of the belly will be increased, principally by wind; the pulse will be quick & small; and the caput so ~~great~~ much increased, that the patient will be unwilling to change the position in which he is placed. These symptoms Mr. White observes, most commonly precede the swelling of the Lymphatic Glands externally. — As these symptoms sufficiently characterize the disease, it is unnecessary to add more.

Scrophula, generally, shows itself during infancy, between the age of three & seven years, tho, this is by no means uniformly the Case; Mr. White has seen it from the age of four days to sixty years & upwards.

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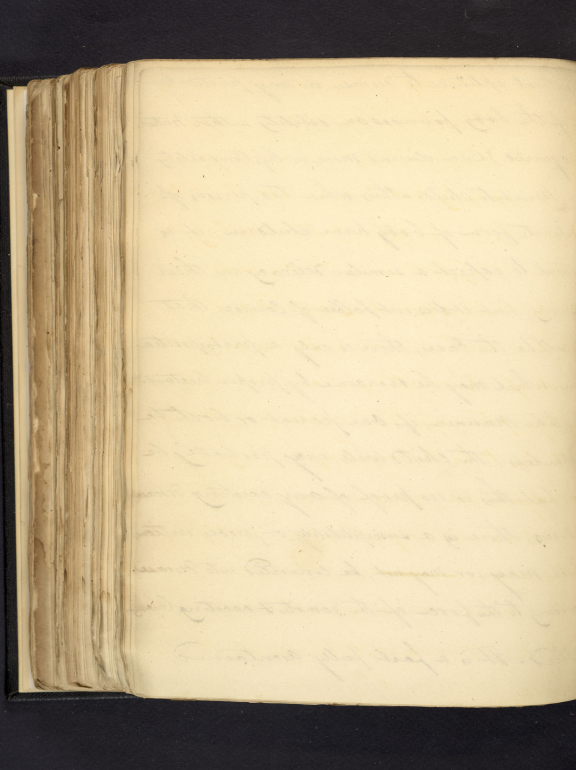
I have seen it from twelve to thirty years, and
My friend W. Murray, informs me he has seen
it in a man of fifty in Virginia. It
prevails mostly in Marshy Countries and middle
latitudes, hence the reason of its more frequent
appearance in the Southern states. Persons who
have finessing, delicate Complexions, grey or blue
eyes & light hair, are said to be most subject
to this disease, but that this is not the case, has
been proved by the observations of W. White, W.
Carmichael and many others; also from the fact
that, in the Southern states, ten negroes are affected
with it, to one white person; this is also the case
in Philadelphia, as I am informed by W. Elmer
of the Philadelphia Dispensary, this fact clearly proves
the influence of Cleanings, diet, dress &c in producing
the disease. It is not Communicable from one

person to another. Different Animals are subject to it, as Dogs, Horses & Sheep. —

^{most} ~~that~~ writers on Scrophula, Consider it as differing from the generality of diseases, by the Circumstances of hereditary transmission, viz, they conceive it to depend on a certain habit of body, tainted with some peculiar disease derived from one or both Parents; the Common opinion is, that this Acrimony or virus, resides in the blood, and though sometimes apparently extinguished, yet actually exists during life; and that its unhappy Consequences are transmitted from generation to generation: several more modern writers have gone great lengths to disprove this absurd opinion, but in doing so, they have fallen into the opposite extreme. It is certainly as much a hereditary disease as any other, viz, it is so, as far as predisposition, by which is meant a

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preternatural aptitude to disease in any particular
part of the body, founded on debility either nature
or acquired) Can descend more or less completely
from parent to child. - thus when two persons of
a delicate form of body have children, it is
natural to expect a similar delicacy in their
offspring, but it does not follow of course that
this will be the case, there is only a predisposition
given, which may be overcome by proper treatment.

In like manner, if one parent or both be
scrophulous, the child will very probably be
so, but this is no proof of any existing virus
or virus; there is a susceptibility, or predisposition,
which may, or may not, be converted into disease,
according to the force of the remote & exciting causes
applied. It is a fact fully ascertained,



However, by most writers on scrophula, as well as
 by my own observations, that it runs very
 much in certain families; but at the same
 time, it is equally well known, that the Children
 of Scrophulous parents, often continue as long as
 they live, entirely free from the disease; and
 that one child is sometimes afflicted, while
 its Father, Mother, Brothers, Sisters, and all
 the rest of its relations, have never had
 any symptoms of the disease; - all these
 facts are to be accounted for, only, by a
 knowledge of the predispositions, and the various
 combinations and changes they are Capable of
 undergoing. — Authors have
 differed much in opinion, with respect to what
 they call, the proximate Cause of this
 disease. Galen & his followers, thought

it arose from a cold pituitous matter, producing tumefaction by stagnating in the glands. Others, imagining a determinate quantity of solids, and fluids to be necessary to the formation of the human body, and its preservation in health, have ascribed this, and a variety of other diseases to a redundant quantity of the fluids. Avicenna supposed it arose from melancholy. Wiseman maintained that the proximate cause depended on a prevailing acidity in the serous part of the blood. Doctor Cullen, convinced, that a simple redundancy of any particular humour could not produce scrophula, had recourse to the supposition of a peculiar acrimony of the fluids. W. B. Bell, says that whatever may be the exciting or predisposing Causes of Scrophula, the disease itself either depends

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upon, or is intimately Connected with a debility of the Constitution in general, and probably of the lymphatic system in particular. He says that he is induced to believe this, from the remedies which have been found most serviceable in the Cure, being all of a tonic, invigorating nature.

It would be tedious and useless to expatiate on the many absurd notions which have been entertained by various other writers: I shall only mention those of Mr. White, and Mr. Carmichael, each of whom, has taken considerable pains, to enforce their opinions.

The former, supposes it to arise immediately from obstructions in the lymphatic system, most frequently occasioned by a viscosity of lymph, or that fluid contained in the lymphatic system.

The latter, has written a treatise, dated Feb. 1800.

professedly, to prove the proximate Cause to be
Disorder of the digestive organs, producing Acetous
fermentation in the primae viae; but in what
Manner this Can excite the phenomena of
Scrophula, he says (himself, would lead to idle
speculations to Conjecture. He says, that the
advantages derived from alkaline Medicines,
and Animal food in Scrophula, testify the opinion
that it arises from an excess of Acid in the body.

These, without adding any more, may be
sufficient to shew the Contrariety of Opinions
that have been entertained on this subject;
That none of them, are founded on Reason, or
Correct principle, is evinced, by the inefficacy
of the numerous & widely different Medicines
which they have recommended, for ~~the~~ uniform success
in the treatment of the disease. —

= manly I but what Care of their private
Pursuits

I believe, with Doctor Rush, that Scrophula is a misplaced state of fever; that it is originally an Arterial disease, thrown on the Lymphatic system, from predisposing debility in those parts; and that this debility is either native or acquired.

That it is a misplaced state of Fever, I infer, 1st from its remote and exciting Causes, which are, Marsh & Human Miasmata; ⁺ Certain Aliments which act by their quantity or quality; too much or too little food; food of Unwholesome qualities; improper dress; Worms; Costiveness; suppression of perspiration; sedentary life; undue exercise of the understanding; different passions of the mind; heat & cold succeeding each other &c. - 2nd I infer it, from its first symptoms; which are dry skin; red and clean, or furred tongue; swelled, black,

and spongy Gums; Corded & tense, or feeble and frequent pulse; and from its sometimes suddenly producing death. 3rd I infer its being originally a febrile disease, from its affecting all ages, Colours, Sexes & habits. 4th I infer it, from its affecting ~~all~~ ^{various} Animals, besides Man, particularly Hogs, Horses and Sheep. It is an endemic at Barbadoes and is called a glandular disease[†]. It affects different glands, sometimes the testes, Mesenteric glands, Liver, eyes, bladder, ovaria & intestines, sometimes even the teeth & bones. - The above Circumstances taken together so fully prove the identity of Scrophula and Fever, that it is unnecessary to Cite any more. There is Certainly no more reason for attaching any specific character to this disease, than to those forms of Morbid excitement called Gout & Rheumatism, which are now

[†] Rush. -

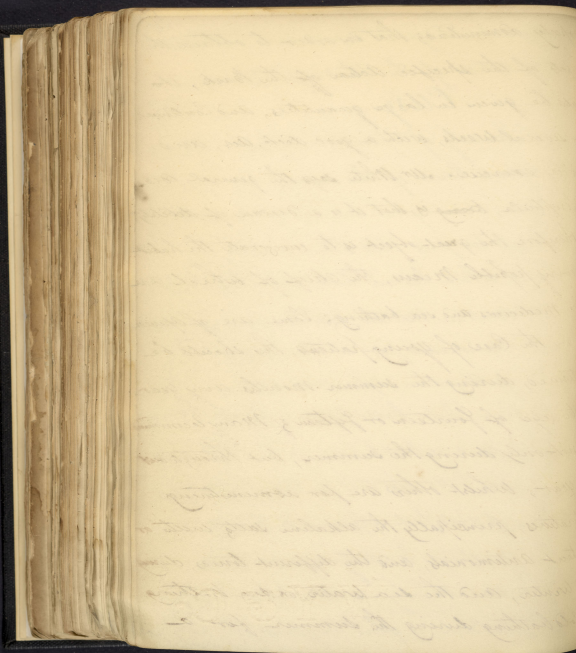
generally acknowledged to depend on morbid or irregular action of the blood vessels. —

Cure.

From the variety of opinions entertained, respecting the proximate Cause of this disease, we would naturally expect great diversity of practices; Accordingly we find that there is scarcely a Medicine, which has not been reputed as useful; the whole Materia Medica, both ancient and modern has been ransacked for a specific; and in no disease do Physicians differ more about the Cure than in this. Doctor Cullen recommends Mineral Waters, & the Bark, which however he had not much Confidence in. He says that in several instances the leaves of Collisfoot appeared to him to be successful; He speaks decidedly against the use of Antimony and Mercury. — Mr Burns says that the peruvian Bark is often ineffectual, because

Close.

Improperly administered; that in order to obtain the
benefits of the specific action of the Bark, it
should be given in large quantities, and continued
for several Weeks, with a good diet, Air, and
proper exercise. Mr White says the general idea
of Scurvy, being is, that it is a disease of debility,
and therefore the great object is to invigorate the habit
by every possible means, the chief of which are
tonic Medicines and sea bathing; Some are of opinion
that, in the Case of young patients, this should be
continued, during the summer months, every year
to the age of Fourteen or fifteen; Many recommend
it not only during the summer, but through out
the year; Whilst others are for administering
alteratives, principally the alkaline salts, with or
without Antimonials, and the different tonics, during
the winter, and the sea water, or sea bathing
or Cold bathing during the summer, for a

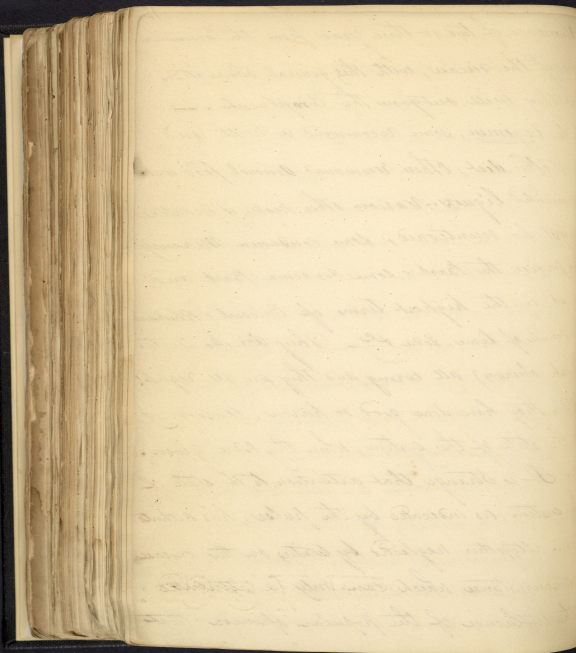


Continuance of two or three years from the Commencement of the disease; with this general observation is that they will outgrow the Complaint. —

As to Regimen, some recommend a Milk and Vegetable diet, Others recommend Animal food and fermented liquors. — Various other modes of practice might be mentioned, some condemn Mercury, and praise the Bark; some condemn Bark and speak in the highest terms, of Calomel & Rhubarb Carbonate of lime, &c. &c. — They are, as Doctor Rush observes) all wrong, and They are all right!

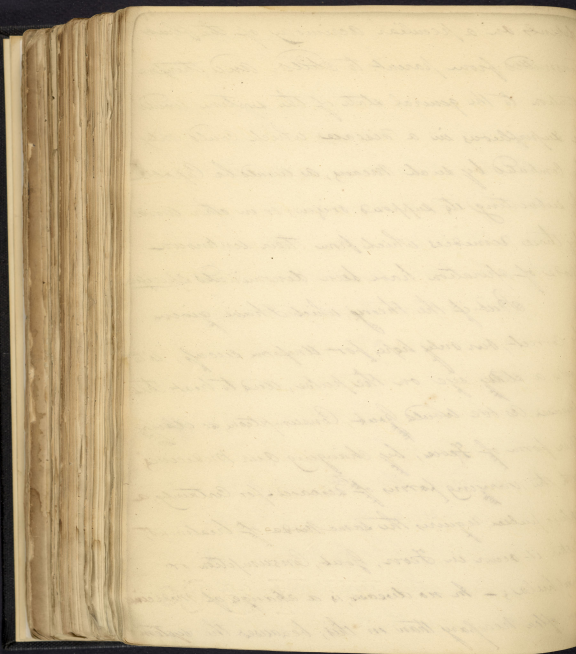
Viz they have done good or harm, according to the state of the system, when they were given.

It is strange that attention to the state of the system, as indicated by the pulse, has hitherto been altogether neglected by writers on this disease, a circumstance, which can only be attributed to the influence of the popular opinion, that



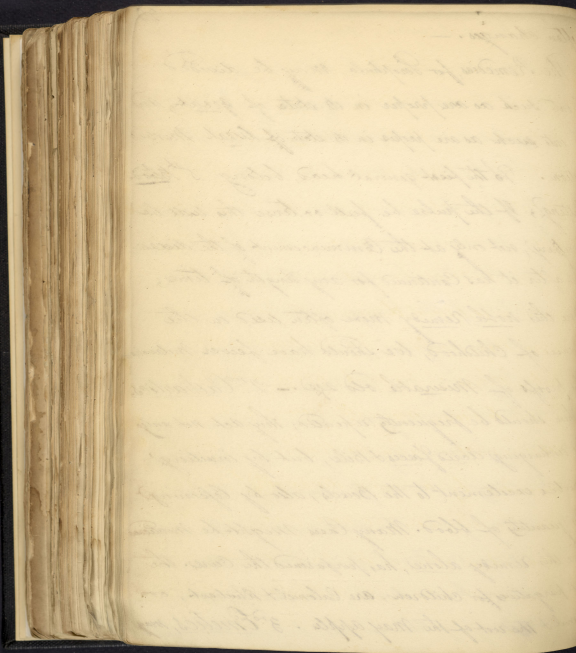
it depends on a peculiar acrimony of the fluids
transmitted from parent to child, and therefore
attention to the general state of the system, would
be superfluous in a disease, which could only
be combated by such means, as would be capable
of subverting its supposed origin; or in other words
by those remedies which from their unknown
mode of operation, have been denominated specifics.

But if the theory, which I have given
be correct, our only hope for uniform success, is to
keep a steady eye on the pulse, and to treat the
disease, as we would Goat, Consumption, or ~~other~~
other form of Fever, by changing our medicines
with the varying forms of the disease. For certainly a
Pyphus pulse, requires the same mode of treatment,
whether it occur in Fever, Goat, Consumption or
Peripneumonia; - In no disease, is a change of medicines
more often necessary than in this; because the system

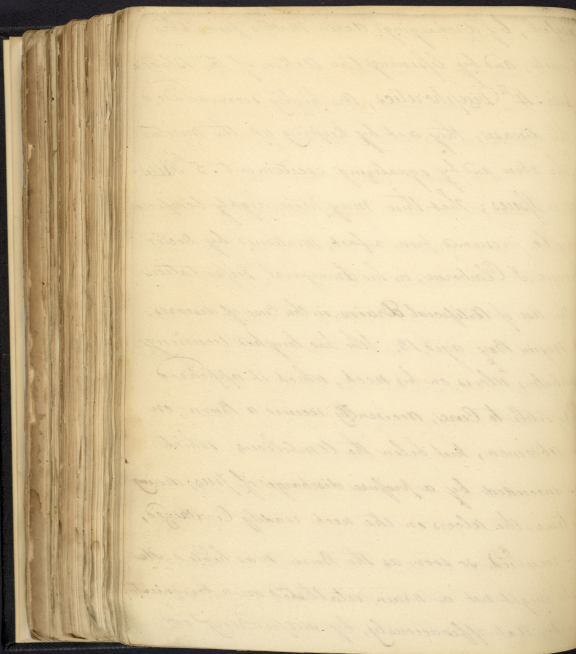


so often changes. —

The Remedies, for Scrophula, may be divided
 1st into such as are proper in its state of great, and
 2nd into such as are proper in its state of Weak, Morbid
 Action. To the first general head, belong, 1st Blood
Cutting; If the pulse be full or tense this will be
 necessary, not only at the Commencement of the disease,
 but after it has Continued for any length of time;
 Were this noble Remedy more often used in the
 Diseases of Childhood, we should have fewer Melancholy
 proofs of Miserable old age. — 2nd Cathartics,
 these should be frequently repeated; they act not only
 by discharging Acrid Juices & Bile, but by inviting
 Morbid excitement to the Bowels, also by lessening
 the quantity of blood. Many Cases might be mentioned
 where this remedy alone, has performed the Cure. The
 best purgatives for children, are Calomel & Rhubarb, or
 Calomel & the root of the May apple. 3rd Emetics, may



be useful, by discharging acrid matters from the
stomach; and by lessening the action of the Blood-
vessels. 4th Diaphoretics, are highly recommended
in this disease, they act by keeping up the moisture
of the skin, and by equalizing excitement. 5th Blist-
ters or Issues; that these may prove highly beneficial,
may be presumed, from a fact, mentioned by Doctor
Devenux. S. Claiborne, in his Inaugural Dissertation
On the use of Artificial Drains, in the Case of diseases;
"A Negro Boy aged 13, who had long had running
Scrophulous ulcers on his neck, which it appeared
impossible to Cure, accidentally received a Burn, on
the abdomen, just below the Umbilicus, which
was succeeded by a profuse discharge of pus; during
this time, the ulcers on the neck readily Cicatrized,
but recurred, so soon, as the Burn was healed; the
Author might not a drain established on a convenient
part, act efficaciously, by suspending or



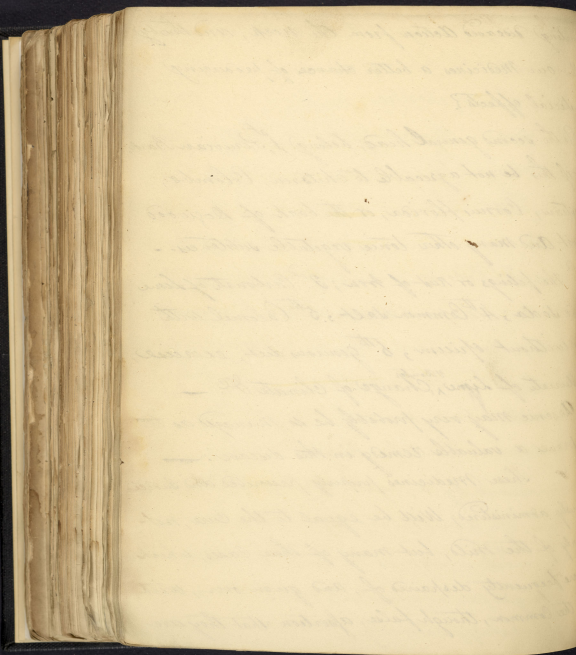
diverting diseased Action from the neck, and thereby
allow our Medicines, a better chance of producing
beneficial effects?

To the second general head, belong, 1st Peruvian Bark,
or if this be not agreeable to children, Colombo,
Gentian, Cornus florida, or the bark of Dogwood
root, And many other tonic vegetable substances. -

2nd The filings or rust of iron; 3rd Carbonate of Lime
and Soda; 4th Common salt; 5th Calomel with
or without opium; 6th generous diet, exercise,
Muriate of Lime, ^{or Borax} Change of Climate &c. -

Arsenic may very probably be so managed as to
prove a valuable remedy in this disease. -

These Medicines properly prescribed and judi-
ciously administered, Will be equal to the Cure, not
only of the mild, but many of those Cases, which
are frequently despaired of, and given over, with
the Common, though false, assertion that they are



incurable". It would be useless, and lead me beyond
the limits assigned to this essay, to Notice the numerous
external applications that have been recommended in
different stages of Scrophulous ulcers. It may be sufficient
to observe that all stimulating and irritating applications,
should be avoided; and that, the dressings should be
of the mildest kind, unless the tumors shall have
become indolent. —

I must now offer my sincere thanks, to
the Professors; not only for the benefit derived,
from their several lectures; but for other
Favours received. —

